

42. (Amended Once) The method of claim 40, wherein said *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence is Hath1.

43. (Amended Once) The method of claim 40, wherein said delivery comprises injecting into an inner ear a therapeutically effective amount of an *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence.

44. (Amended Once) The method of claim 40, wherein said nucleic acid sequence is delivered by a delivery vehicle.

45. (Amended Once) The method of claim 44 wherein said delivery vehicle is selected from the group consisting of an adenoviral vector, a retroviral vector, an adeno-associated viral vector, a plasmid, a liposome, a peptide, a lipid, a carbohydrate and a combination thereof.

112. (Amended Once) A composition comprising an *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence in combination with a delivery vehicle, wherein said delivery vehicle results in delivery of a therapeutically effective amount of *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence into a cell, and wherein said *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence encodes a polypeptide that has hair cell generating activity and has at least about 80% identity to about 20 contiguous residues of SEQ ID NO:58.

121. (Amended Once) A nucleic acid sequence encoding a fusion protein comprising an *atonal*-associated amino acid sequence or fragment thereof and a desired amino acid sequence, wherein said *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence encodes a polypeptide that has hair cell generating activity and has at least about 80% identity to about 20 contiguous residues of SEQ ID NO:58.

123. (Amended Once) The composition of claim 112, wherein the composition further comprises an additional nucleic acid sequence that is not an *atonal*-associated nucleic acid sequence.